

City & Town - October 15th, 2015

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Division of Local Services

City & Town

Supporting a Commonwealth of Communities

Mark E. Nunnally, Commissioner • Sean R. Cronin, Senior Deputy Commissioner of Local Services



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[Local Officials Directory](#)

[Municipal Calendar](#)

[IGR's & Bulletins](#)

[Workshops, Seminars & Events](#)

[What's New?](#)

City & Town is published by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) and is designed to address matters of interest to local officials.

Editor: Dan Bertrand

Editorial Board: Sean Cronin, Anthonia Bakare, Robert Bliss, Linda Bradley, Nate Cramer, Patricia Hunt, Tara Lynch and Tony Rassias

In this Issue:

- [Community Compact Update and New Grant Opportunities](#)
- [Ways to Ensure Timely Local Aid Payments](#)
- [By the Numbers](#)
- [Local Officials Gather to Hear "What's New in Municipal Law"](#)
- [Capital Conversations: Talk to MassDOT About Transportation Investments for Your Region](#)
- [Register for the Public Sector IT Event of the Year](#)
- [OSD Business Networking Event Coming to a Neighborhood Near You](#)

Community Compact and Additional Grant Program Updates

Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito



Hello all! I hope this message finds your community doing well.

Allow me to begin my October note with an update on the Community Compact Program. More than 120 applications have been submitted, and today I signed the 41st compact in the beautiful Berkshires. The Governor and I continue to be impressed with the response and eagerness that cities and towns have shown to achieve best practices and policy initiatives.

Many communities that have applied and signed compacts will receive points for a number of statewide grants. One of the major grants included in the program is the MassWorks Infrastructure Program. At the end of the month, we will announce the communities that have been awarded grants for economic development and infrastructure projects. Please stay tuned!

I also would like to tell you about another resource. Last Monday, Governor Baker and I announced the availability of applications for the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development's [Urban Agenda Economic Development Grant Program](#). This program recognizes that urban communities face significant economic and quality of life challenges and that the path to sustainable growth lies in tapping into unique, local assets instead of one-size-fits-all directives.

The Urban Agenda Economic Development Grant Program provides three types of grants: economic development implementation, planning and technical assistance, and housing. Economic Development Implementation grants will advance employment and economic opportunity by supporting creative local partnerships and programs. Planning and technical assistance grants will bring residents and other stakeholders together to identify opportunities for shared work on quality-of-life issues and to build coalitions and social capital within the community. Both programs will be administered by EOHED.

The program grants seek to increase the supply of multi-family housing across the Commonwealth for a range of incomes. They will assist cities and towns to expand housing opportunities, particularly those leveraging vacant or under utilized publicly-owned land. The program also supports predevelopment and soft costs related to multi-family housing construction. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will administer the Urban Agenda Housing Program grants.

The Urban Agenda Grant Program will distribute \$3 million with award caps of \$500,000 for Economic Development grants, \$50,000 for Planning grants, and \$200,000 for Housing grants. Applications will be open until December 11th, 2015, so make sure to submit yours to DHCD before the deadline!

As always, thank you for all that you do for cities and towns. We are committed to supporting and assisting you in this important work.

Ways to Ensure Timely Local Aid Payments

Lisa Krzywicki - Municipal Databank and Local Aid Unit Director

Municipal treasurers should be mindful that any changes in their current banking institutions may impact their monthly Local Aid payments. As always, treasurers are encouraged to get the best investment on city and town revenues, and it is our hope to help local officials to become better informed of the process.

Lately, we have received a number of calls from municipalities on the following topics:

- Monthly Local Aid was deposited in the wrong account
- Switched banks and don't know how to notify the Commonwealth
- Monthly Local Aid payments were received as paper checks

In order to change the banking institution on record the community needs to complete the Office of the Comptroller's Electronic Transfer Sign-Up form ([click here for the form](#)), attach a copy of a canceled check (or a letter from the bank, if it is a money market account), sign and mail it to the Municipal Databank. Since this form impacts the receipt of state aid, the Comptroller's office requires a *wet* signature on the form; therefore no email or fax copies are accepted.

The timing of these changes is important. Once the form is received and entered into the state accounting system, it takes approximately two weeks to be finalized. Municipalities are encouraged to submit these changes within the first two weeks of the month to ensure adequate processing time and reduce the possibility of payment issues.

Treasurers with questions about completing the Office of the Comptroller's Electronic Transfer Sign-Up form should contact the Municipal Databank at (617) 626-2384.

By the Numbers

City & Town will provide updates on the progress of the tax rate and certification season in each edition through the rest of the calendar year. In addition to these helpful statistics, we're also pleased to announce that for the first time you can now follow the tax rate setting

process in real time. Thanks to our Municipal Databank staff, this public information is available 24/7 by clicking [here](#).

Preliminary Certifications: 52 Communities Approved

Final Certification: 27 Communities (of 117 Total in Certification Year)

LA4/ New Growth: 110 Approved (144 Submitted)

Tax Rates: 29 Approved

Balance Sheets: 146 Approved

Aggregate Free Cash Approved Total: \$596,877,245

Local Officials Gather to Hear "What's New in Municipal Law"

Municipal Finance Law Bureau

Over 400 local officials attended the 30th annual "What's New in Municipal Law" seminars held on October 1, 2015 at The Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House in Holyoke and October 8th, 2015 at The Lantana in Randolph.

In the morning general sessions, they heard Municipal Finance Law Bureau attorneys Kathleen Colleary, Bureau Chief, Gary Blau, James Crowley, John Gannon, Donald Gorton and Patricia Hunt review new legislation and recent court and Appellate Tax Board cases. In the afternoon session, the attorneys led three workshops on (1) assessing condominiums and time-shares, and collecting personal property taxes; (2) adopting and amending municipal operating and capital budgets; and (3) negotiating and funding retiree post-employment benefits.

If you were not able to attend one of this year's seminars, the morning presentation materials and afternoon workshop booklets are available on our [website](#).

We look forward to seeing you at the 31st annual "What's New in Municipal Law" seminar next fall. The dates to save are Thursday, September 29th, 2016 at The Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House in Holyoke and Thursday, October 6th, 2016 at The Lantana in Randolph.

Capital Conversations: Talk to MassDOT about Transportation Investments for Your Region

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

What current and future highway projects in your region are important to you? Do you have an innovative idea to maintain our roads and bridges? How important are public transit, pedestrian, or bicycle facilities to you? Do general aviation airports or Registry of Motor Vehicles branches in your region need investment? How much transportation funding should go into maintaining our existing roads, bridges, and public transit systems and how much into expanding services and facilities into new areas?

MassDOT and the MBTA are preparing five-year capital plans, blueprints that will guide investments in our transportation system between 2017 and 2021. The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) determines how we prioritize our largest investments, covering all transportation projects - everything from highway and municipal projects to regional airports and rail and transit, including the MBTA and Regional Transit Authorities.

These Capital Conversations will help to guide our five-year CIP process as well as upcoming planning processes for statewide bicycle, pedestrian and rail plans. We want to hear from you about how those investments should be prioritized in order to maintain and modernize the Commonwealth's transportation facilities. How can we improve our transportation systems, increase transportation capacity where existing facilities are inadequate, and build new projects to help communities to prosper and residents to get where they need to go?

Representatives from MassDOT and the MBTA will be on hand to hear your input about transportation needs and capital priorities. Please help spread the word about these Capital Conversations to friends, family and business associates. Your participation is critical to our success.

Join the conversation about the future of our transportation investments. Make your voice heard.

Monday, October 19th

4pm - State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

6pm - Boston English High School, 144 McBride Street, Boston

Wednesday, October 21st

6pm - Leominster City Hall, 25 West Street, Leominster

6:30pm - Union Station, 2 Washington Square, Worcester

Thursday, October 22nd

6:30pm - Cambridge Rindge and Latin HS, 459 Broadway, Cambridge

Monday, October 26th

6pm - Braintree City Hall, 1 John F. Kennedy Memorial Dr., Braintree

6pm - Bangs Community Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst

Tuesday, October 27th

6pm - Battleship Cove Museum (Ward Room), 5 Water St., Fall River

6pm - Middlesex Comm. College - Lowell, 33 Kearney Sq., Lowell

Wednesday, October 28th

6pm - Peabody City Hall, Wiggin Auditorium, 24 Lowell St., Peabody

6pm - Natick Town Hall, 13 East Central Street, Natick

Thursday, October 29th

6pm - Pittsfield City Hall, City Council Chamber, 70 Allen St., Pittsfield

6pm - Plymouth Town Hall (Harbor Room), 11 Lincoln St., Plymouth

Monday, November 2nd

6:30pm - Mansfield Town Hall, 6 Park Row, Mansfield

Thursday, November 5th

6pm - Springfield City Hall, 36 Court Street, Springfield

6:30pm - Cape Cod Community College, Tilden Arts Theater, 2240
Iyannough Rd., West Barnstable

Meeting locations are accessible to people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. Accessibility accommodations and language services will be provided free of charge upon request as available. Requests should be submitted at least ten days of the meeting at which services will be required, if at all possible. Such services include documents in alternative formats, translated documents, assistive listening devices, and interpreters (including American Sign Language). For more information or to request reasonable accommodation and/or language services, please contact Trish Foley at (857) 368-8907 or trish.foley@dot.state.ma.us.

Can't make a meeting? Post your ideas [here](#) or email comments to masscip@state.ma.us.

Register for the Public Sector IT Event of the Year

Massachusetts Office of Information Technology

This year, the 21st annual [Massachusetts Digital Government Summit](#) will be held on Monday and Tuesday, November 2nd and 3rd at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston. This event is designed for and limited to members of our public sector IT community.

Each year, the summit gives our state and municipal government IT workers the opportunity to gather and hear the latest on technology initiatives from Commonwealth leaders and industry experts while networking with colleagues from across the state.

The opening keynote by communication coach and master impressionist Jim Meskimen will illustrate methods used by some of the world's most charismatic communicators. It will be followed by an interactive session that highlights key lessons learned from recent real-life cases of cyber security challenges and *Fast Track* sessions - our version of quick-hit TED-type talks - ensuring that this year's event promises to be both informative and lively.

In-depth breakout sessions will cover a range of topics, including trends in data, networking, citizen engagement, and procurement strategies for leveraging the cloud. City of Boston CIO Jascha Franklin-Hodge will deliver a *Fast Track* talk on the evolving IT workforce, and a panel will deliver our first-ever *20 Apps in 20 Minutes* session. Winners of the fifth annual *Excellence in Technology* awards will be announced as well.

Please [register here](#). For a glimpse of last year's summit, check out this brief [highlight video](#).

Please note:

- There is no cost to attend.
- Full agenda and registration link are available [here](#).
- Registration is open only to members of our public sector workforce.
- The Summit will be held at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, 64 Arlington Street, Boston.
- The event runs for a full day on Monday, November 2nd and a half-day on the morning of Tuesday, November 3rd.

- Please feel free to forward this message to colleagues.

OSD Business Networking Event Coming to a Neighborhood Near You

Operational Services Division

Recognizing the importance of small and diverse businesses to our communities and the Massachusetts economy, the [Operational Services Division's \(OSD\) Supplier Diversity Office](#), in collaboration with Governor Baker's Office of Access and Opportunity and the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, is hosting a series of events designed to support these businesses. We cordially invite local procurement officials to attend the networking event scheduled for your area and host an exhibit table to meet with small and diverse business owners from your community.

The MA Supplier Diversity Regional Series (The Series) kicks off in Lawrence on October 27th and continues in November traveling to Worcester (November 3rd), Roxbury (November 5th), New Bedford (November 13th), and Springfield (November 18th). The Series provides local businesses the forum to engage with state, municipal, and private buyers, statewide contract vendors, and local development and nonprofit organizations to advance their opportunities for growth.

The Series' goals are to assist small and diverse businesses by:

- Increasing the marketplace of business opportunities for small and diverse enterprises in Massachusetts;
- Convening procurement representatives from state, municipal, and private organizations with small and diverse business owners;
- Promoting networking between small and diverse businesses with buyers and key procurement decision makers; and
- Providing small and diverse businesses with access to capacity-building resources.

Spread the Word and Reserve Your Exhibit Table

Local procurement officials play an essential role in ensuring the success of this important initiative. We encourage you to:

- Share details about this networking opportunity with your community businesses. Information and business registration links are available on [OSD's website](#).
- Attend the event in your region to meet and network with area businesses. Use this opportunity to connect upcoming purchases with potential bidders. [Reserve a spot](#) at one of our exhibit tables today.

Need more information about The Series? Send an email to osd-events@state.ma.us.

October Municipal Calendar

October 1	Taxpayer	Deadline for Submitting Forest Land Certification and Management Plan, MGL Ch. 61 According to MGL Ch. 61, Section 2, this is the deadline to submit to the Assessors the State Forester's certification and approved management plan in order to have the land valued as classified forest land in the next fiscal year.
October 1	Collector	Mail Semi-Annual Tax Bills For communities using the regular semi-annual payment system, actual tax bills or optional preliminary bills should be mailed by this date.
October 1	Taxpayer	Semi-Annual Preliminary Tax Bill - Deadline for Paying Without Interest According to MGL Ch. 59, Sec. 57C, this is the deadline for

		<p>receipt of the preliminary tax payment without interest in communities using the annual preliminary tax billing system, unless the bills were mailed after August 1. If mailed after August 1, the payment is due November 1, or 30 days after the bills were mailed, whichever is later.</p>
October 1	Taxpayer	<p>Deadline for Applying to Have Land Classified as Agricultural/Horticultural Land or Recreational Land, MGL Ch. 61A and Ch. 61B</p> <p>According to MGL Ch. 61A, Sections 6 and 8, and Ch. 61B, Sections 3 and 5, this is the deadline to apply to Assessors to have land valued, taxed and classified as agricultural/horticultural or recreational land in the next fiscal year, unless a revaluation program is being conducted for that fiscal year. Under MGL Ch. 59, Section 38 and DOR guidelines, Assessors must review all property valuations and make adjustments to ensure current fair cash valuations every year. Because a revaluation program is being conducted every year, taxpayers who do not submit their applications by October 1 have until 30 days after the actual tax bills for the fiscal year are mailed to apply.</p>
October 15	Superintendent	<p>Submit School Foundation Enrollment Report to DESE</p>

October 31	Selectmen	Begin Establishing Next Fiscal Year Budget Guidelines and Request Department Budgets
October 31	Assessors	<p>Begin Work on Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet (to set tax rate for annual preliminary tax bill communities)</p> <p>A community that uses the annual preliminary tax bill system (on a quarterly or semiannual basis) should begin gathering tax recap information in order to have enough time for the tax rate to be set and tax bills mailed by December 31. See August's Complete Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet.</p>
Final Day of Each Month	State Treasurer	<p>Notification of monthly local aid distribution.</p> <p>Click www.mass.gov/treasury/cash-management to view distribution breakdown.</p>

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